

REMARKS

Claims 1-34 are pending.

Drawings

Applicant acknowledges that the drawings were received and approved by the examiner.

Rejections of claims 1-3, 5-8, 10-13 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

Claims 1-3, 5-8, 10-13 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being unpatentable over *Otsuka et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,263,089). Although Applicant disagrees with these rejections, independent claims 1, 6 and 11 have each been canceled without prejudice in this amendment.

Claims 4, 9, and 14 have each been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of their respective base claims and any intervening claims. Therefore, claims 4, 9, and 14 are believed to be allowable.

Claims 2, 3, and 5 have each been amended to depend from claim 4, which is believed to be allowable. Therefore, each of claims 2, 3 and 5 is believed to be allowable, and such allowance is respectfully requested.

Claims 7, 8, and 10 have each been amended to depend from claim 9, which is believed to be allowable. Therefore, each of claims 7, 8, and 10 is believed to be allowable, and such allowance is respectfully requested.

Claims 12, 13, and 15 have each been amended to depend from claim 14, which is believed to be allowable. Therefore, each of claims 12, 13, and 15 is believed to be allowable, and such allowance is respectfully requested.

Rejections of claim 16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claim 16 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being unpatentable over *Fujimoto et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,864,779). Although Applicant disagrees with this rejection, claim 16 has been canceled without prejudice in this amendment.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 4, 9, and 14 have each been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the respective base claim and any intervening claims.

New Claims

New claims 17 - 34 have been added. New claims 17 - 22 depend from claim 4, and are therefore believed to be allowable. New claims 23 - 28 depend from claim 9, and are therefore believed to be allowable. New claims 29 - 34 depend from claim 14, and are therefore believed to be allowable. New claims 17 - 34 add no new matter.

Conclusion

The pending claims have been placed in condition for allowance and are clearly patentable over the cited art and should therefore be allowed.

Respectfully Submitted,

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By: 

Damon A. Rieth
Reg. No. 52,167